

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 RIYADH 00118 190742Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 INR-10 PM-05 H-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 NSC-05 /047 W
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R 151229Z FEB 78
FM USLO RIYADH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 322
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

S E C R E T RIYADH 118

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA, US
SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST AIRCRAFT

REF: A) STATE 038206, B) STATE 038203

1. UNDERSECRETARY BENSON AND I SAW PRINCE FAHD AND FOREIGN MINISTER
EVENING FEBRUARY 14 PER INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL.

2. AFTER EXCHANGE PLEASANTRIES I DESCRIBED MISSION OF
UNDERSECRETARY AS PREP FOR UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF
F-15 PROPOSAL. PRINCE FAHD THEN LAUNCHED INTO EXPLANATION OF
REASONS FOR SAUDI AIRCRAFT REQUEST, NATURE OF US-SAUDI COOPERATIVE
RELATIONSHIP AND IMPORTANCE OF SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF
OUTSTANDING REQUEST. FAHD HAD STARTED EXTENDED EXPLANATION ON
THREAT FACING SAUDI ARABIA AND ITS RELATION TO F-15 REQUEST.
BENSON SAID SHE HAD NEWS OF SOME IMPORTANCE TO GIVE HIM.
BENSON THEN SUMMARIZED SECRETARY'S STATEMENT, NOTING ITS
IMMINENT RELEASE, AND GAVE FAHD COPY OF ENGLISH TEXT. SHE
EMPHASIZED FACT THAT PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED TO GO TO CONGRESS

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WITH FULL SAUDI REQUEST, AND QUOTED SUPPORTING RATIONALE CON-
TAINED IN STATEMENT. SHE ALSO UNDERScoreD TIMING OF INFORMAL
AND FORMAL NOTIFICATION PERIOD.

3. FAHD REPLIED THAT HE WAS VERY, VERY PLEASED TO HEAR NEWS
AND SAID HE SAW THE DECISION AS A SINCERE REFLECTION OF GREAT
SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE VIEWED

SAUDI ARABIAN PROBLEM.

4. I THEN DREW ON SUPPLEMENTARY POINTS OF INSTRUCTION CABLE, NOTING AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT DECISION ON F-15S MAY HAVE REPRESENTED LANDMARK IN THAT FOR FIRST TIME AN ARAB STATE HAD HAD ITS REQUEST ENDORSED IN FULL BY THE ADMINISTRATION, REPRESENTING A TANGIBLE EVIDENCE BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE OF THE "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WHICH ALL OF US RECOGNIZED AND VALUED AS BETWEEN OUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. I POINTED OUT THAT ISRAEL'S REQUEST WAS CUT.

5. FAHD AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS GREAT PLEASURE AT ANNOUNCEMENT AND HIS FEELING OF OPTIMISM THAT DECISION WOULD BE ENDORSED BY CONGRESS.

6. BENSON CALLED ATTENTION TO REQUIRMENT FOR SUPPORTING EFFORT BY SAG. SHE ALSO WARNED FAHD THAT CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE WOULD BE ROUGH AND THAT RUDE AND DISAGREEABLE THINGS WOULD BE SAID IN THE COURSE OF IT. FAHD ANSWERED THAT SAG WAS GRATEFUL SHE HAD MENTIONED THAT PROBLEM AND PROMISED THAT SAG WOULD NOT BE FAZED BY IT.

7. ENTIRE SESSION WAS MARKED BY EASY AND GOOD HUMORED ATMOSPHERE. NEITHER FAHD NOR FONMIN REACTED IN ANY WAY TO PACKAGE DIMENSION OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MIDDLE EAST AIRCRAFT
TAGS: MASS, SA, US
To: STATE
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